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## THE FUTURE LIFE IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

## I.

IT has often been asserted that the rewards and penalties of a future state had little or no influence on the Jews of the Middle Ages, and that, therefore, the history of the persecutions they endured becomes doubly touching and pathetic; the tragedy of their death is not brightened by any hope of recompense, human or divine, earthly or heavenly. To show the erroneous nature of this supposition, the following pages have been written.

With respect to the Old Testament, the barest summary of the most probable conclusions upon the subject is all that is here necessary. A number of books are accessible to every student in which the arguments and illustrations for every side of the question have been fully worked out. Our business is with the Jewish beliefs in post-Biblical ages.

Neither the authors of the Pentateuch nor the prophets ever taught the Hebrew people that after the death of the body the soul would enter upon another life, in which the good would find eternal happiness, and the wicked everlasting pain. On the contrary, every action is to meet with its reward or punishment in this world. Good health, long life, plentiful harvests, and numerous offspring are held out as a recompense to those who faithfully obey the divine precepts, while those who disregard them are threatened with disease, premature death, barren soil, and childless homes. These are the recompenses and punishments of the individual, while to the people as a whole, liberty, independence, and victory are contrasted with political weakness, enslavement, and captivity.

Yet the Hebrews, like every other nation of antiquity, were far from believing that the soul perished with the body. The old Hebrew conception of Sheol, and the dream-like unsubstantial life of the shades in that dismal region, is too well known to need further exposition in this place.

Yet true as it is that the ancient Hebrews recognised a life

beyond the grave, it is equally true that they did not set forth a belief in a future state as a compensation for the good and evil of this earthly existence.

To the old Hebrews death and Sheol are gloomy and comfortless. Their most fervent prayers are for "length of days." Sheol is the place of darkness where there is no remembrance of God, and his praises are unsung. And from Sheol there is no return.

Thus legislators and prophets have only temporal rewards and punishments to hold out as an inducement to follow God's laws, and avoid disobedience to his teaching. As, however, the reward of virtue is not always bestowed in this life any more than is the punishment of vice, it was inevitable that the problem, so terrible to every religious man, how to reconcile the apparently unjust distribution of the joys and sorrows of this world with the idea of a divine providence, should present itself more than once to the mind of the Hebrew writers. It forms the entire argument of the Book of Job; the author of Ecclesiastes touches on it several times;<sup>1</sup> it is mentioned in certain passages in Proverbs,<sup>2</sup> as also in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah,<sup>3</sup> and in those of two of the Psalmists.<sup>4</sup> So early was the problem set, but it cannot be said that it has ever been solved.

The conclusion of the Book of Job is worthy of note. The Lord appears to the persecuted martyr, and, in a series of questions, demonstrates to him the infinite power of the Deity. Job at last, in his confusion, is compelled to admit that the human mind cannot and ought not to scrutinise the mysteries of Providence. But this is not a solution of the problem; it is only a way of showing that while the problem exists, it must for mankind remain unsolved. This alone is enough to prove that the Book of Job contains no allusion to a future life, and that the passages, to which such an interpretation has at times been given, bear, on the contrary, a wholly different meaning, inasmuch as the author was convinced that the dying man goes, without hope of return, to a land of darkness (x. 21<sup>5</sup>), and lies down never to rise again (xiv. 12).

Jeremiah, the Psalmists, and the wise men of Proverbs are all equally impotent to solve the riddle. None of them (not even the author of Psalm lxxiii.) look to a future life as affording the slightest clue to the complex mystery. They can only take refuge in the firm conviction that God is just, be

<sup>1</sup> ii. 21-25 ; vii. 15 ; viii. 14 ; ix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> xxiii. 17 *et seq.* ; xxiv. 14, 19 *et seq.*    <sup>3</sup> xii. 1-5.    <sup>4</sup> xxxvii. ; lxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> Compare *Della Poesia Biblica*, page 540 *et seq.*

appearances what they may. Whatever the facts of life may seem to prove, any interpretation of them conflicting with God's justice is erroneous. Before that infinite and inscrutable power man, the creature of a day, must humbly bow.

Little by little the eschatological beliefs of the Israelites underwent change and modification, and in the writings subsequent to the Babylonian exile we find the doctrine of a life beyond the grave, not merely accepted by the learned, but beginning to take a more precise and definite outline.

The hope of being saved from the dark and dreary abode of Sheol, and of dwelling in heaven in nearness to God, is touched on in passing by the poet author of the late 49th Psalm. In this beautiful hymn death is described as the destiny of all men, which none can hope to escape. But in the fifteenth verse, the poet says, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for he shall receive me." The word "Sheol" cannot here be used figuratively to signify death, as the poet could not express a hope that would be in contradiction to his first statement that none can escape from death. It would, therefore, not be far-fetched to admit, in common with some interpreters, that in this passage the author hints at a diversity between the fate of human beings in general and that of those who, by their special merits, may after death aspire to a dwelling-place, not sad and gloomy like that awaiting the spirits in Sheol, but a region of everlasting beatitude. In later times, in fact, Sheol became one of the names for hell, or for a part of hell,<sup>1</sup> and was thus changed into a special place of punishment for the wicked only.

The question as to the fate of the human soul is clearly propounded in Ecclesiastes. Whatever opinion may prevail as regards the date of this book, it is obvious to all who have read it by the light of reasonable criticism, that it must have been written *after* the period of the Persian rule. It is undeniable that the writer hints at the belief that the spirit of man has a destiny different from that of other animals (iii.21). He himself does not deny that this *may* be the case; he merely says that death is the common lot of both man and beast—what becomes of their spirits after death remains uncertain.<sup>2</sup> But subsequently at the conclusion of the book, the author distinctly asserts that the spirit returns "unto God who gave it" (xii. 7). This return is possibly conceived as a mere re-absorption into or a union with the one and indivisible spiritual essence, in the same

<sup>1</sup> *Erubin*, 19a, *Midrash on Psalms*, 11, 7.

<sup>2</sup> The "ו" in the twenty-first verse is to be taken interrogatively, and not demonstratively.

way as the body returns after death to the dust of the earth from which it was taken. But even this cannot be asserted with absolute certainty. The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes is not a materialist, a pantheist, or a spiritualist; he is a sceptic, and he accepts as positive truths only those facts that experience has proved to be unassailable. As a useful rule and guide in practical conduct he seems to borrow from the current religion the maxim, "God will judge all the works of man" (xi. 9), but whether the judgment is to be in this life or another is not said, perhaps is purposely left vague. One passage (iii. 17) is too obscure to allow us to draw any definite conclusion from it.

As regards the Resurrection of the Body, a form of the doctrine of a future life to which some commentators have discovered allusions in several passages of the Old Testament, it cannot be said to be really touched upon anywhere, unless it be in the Book of Daniel (xii. 2, 3, 13), which certainly is not older than the period of Grecian dominion. All the other passages in the Old Testament<sup>1</sup> that speak of the resurrection of the dead do so in a figurative sense, as a symbol, to represent the resurrection of the people of Israel. Nor is the resurrection of the dead ever suggested in the Book of Job, because if the author of that book had entertained such a belief, the solution of the problem forming the argument of his immortal work would have been found in that belief, and not in the inscrutable omnipotence of God.

To sum up, then, all that can be gathered from the Old Testament (not including the writings known as the Apocrypha) respecting a future life amounts to this: A belief in the existence of a life beyond the grave was popularly current among the ancient Hebrews, but their early writers and law-givers never transformed the crude popular belief into a moral and religious doctrine. After the Babylonian exile, however, the future life became more clearly defined under the double form of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

On turning to the Apocrypha, we find this statement confirmed, as the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is clearly set forth in the so-called Wisdom of Solomon, and that of the resurrection of the body in one of the books of the Maccabees. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon, who was notoriously deeply influenced both by Platonic and Stoic philosophy, dwells in more than one passage upon the doctrine of the soul's immortality (cf. ii. 21; iii. 10; v. 15 ff.). To him (his

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<sup>1</sup> Hosea vi. 1, *seq.*; Isaiah xxvi. 19; Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-14.

date cannot be earlier than the second century before Christ) there is no longer any doubt that man's destiny will be perfected in another state of existence, where all the apparent injustice of this life will be abundantly rectified.

The parallel doctrine of the resurrection of the body is dwelt upon by the more purely Judaic author of the second book of the Maccabees. (Compare the speech of Eleazar, "Living or dead, I cannot escape from the hand of the Almighty" (vi. 26), and the boast of the martyrs, "The King of the universe shall raise us up unto everlasting life" (vii. 9, 11, 14, 36), with Judas's sin-offering for the souls of the dead, and the author's approving comment, "if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead . . . . it was a good and holy thought, that he made a supplication for the dead that they might be delivered from sin," xii. 44, 45).

Nevertheless, though the belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body was becoming more and more clearly defined among the Hebrews, there were still writers and thinkers who, even at as recent a date as that of the Grecian rule, maintained the old ideas about death, and Sheol, considering the former as a hopeless calamity and the latter as a region of gloom and oblivion.

The author of Ecclesiasticus advises man to enjoy himself in this life, in which he will earn the fruits of all his knowledge and wisdom, for "there is no seeking for pleasure in Hades" (xiv. 16), nor can any there "praise the Lord" (xvii. 27, etc.). After these distinct statements respecting the dreary hopelessness of a life beyond the grave, another passage in the same book cannot be said to refer to the resurrection of the dead. Speaking of the twelve minor prophets, the author of Ecclesiasticus says that on account of their special merits "their bones blossom in their abiding-place." But if he had believed that the dead would arise and their bones be restored to life, he would not have said that there was no joy or praise of God to be found in Hades, as the righteous after the resurrection of the dead would enjoy everlasting bliss and sing praises for ever to the Eternal. With his opinions it is evident that the writer intended the blossoming of the prophets' bones to be understood as the invocation of a blessing on their graves, much as we say now respecting the dead, May the earth lie lightly upon them. The author of the apocryphal book attributed to Baruch held similar opinions respecting the dead, who, he says, cannot in Hades "give glory to the Lord" (ii. 17).

This variety of opinions is easily explained by the often

repeated fact, that whereas some minds are so constituted as to readily accept new ideas, others are so intensely conservative that they refuse to entertain anything new, and, without first examining whether the novelty be good or useful, pronounce it harmful for the very reason of its novelty.

This was long the case amongst Hebrews with regard to the doctrine of a future life. When the political and religious sects became more distinct, the Pharisees accepted and assimilated the belief that the destiny of man does not end with this life, while the Sadducees not only did not go beyond what they read in the Old Testament, but argued that the soul died with the body.<sup>1</sup>

This being the case we are naturally led to turn our attention to the doctrines of the Pharisees on the subject of a future state. Their teaching is contained in the Talmuds, and in the copious literature of the Hagada and the Midrash.

## II.

It is well known that one of the chief defects of Talmudic literature is its lack of systematic arrangement, so that it cannot be said to contain a categorical statement of what the faithful ought to believe. Dogmas of all kinds are scattered through the Talmud and Midrashim in a confused and apparently incidental manner, as if they were supposed already to form part of Judaism, and the doctrine of a future life is similarly treated. The statements concerning it, though often expressed in short and disconnected sentences, are repeated very frequently, more frequently perhaps than those on any other subject. We do not, therefore, propose to give here all that is said concerning a future life in the vast field of Talmudic literature, but only to collect and set forth the most important points, avoiding all needless repetitions.

To prove that the Pharisees clearly and distinctively admitted the existence of a future life, the following citations will suffice: "God has created two worlds—'*olam ha-zeh*,' the present and '*olam ha-ba*,' the world to come."<sup>2</sup> This world, moreover, is not considered to be the real life, but as compared to the life to come, it is the vestibule or ante-room, through which we pass to the banquet-hall, and we are exhorted to prepare ourselves in the "*olam ha-zeh*," in order to be admitted to the "*olam ha-ba*."<sup>3</sup> Again we are told that

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII. i. 4; *Wars*, II. viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Menachoth*, 29b; *Beresith Rabba*, § 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Aboth*, iv. 16.

one hour of bliss in the future world is worth more than the whole of our present life.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to point out here, what I have dwelt upon elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> that the expression "the world to come" has different meanings in different parts of the Rabbinic writings. In some passages it signifies the way in which the soul lives after the death of the body; in some the Messianic age, and in others the life of mankind after the resurrection of the dead. The subject of the Messianic age does not concern us here, and it need only be spoken of in so far as it is connected with the resurrection. As regards the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, the latter is the one more distinctly taught in the Talmud, though the former is also very clearly and definitely asserted. Maimonides was therefore in error, when with the intention of interpreting the doctrines of the Pharisees in a philosophical and rational manner, he maintains that in the Talmud the world to come ("olam ha-ba") is only considered to signify the separate existence of the soul after the death of the body.<sup>3</sup> No doubt this was often the case, but not always, as shall now be proved.

The two classic passages in the Talmud treating of the resurrection and the last judgment are in the eleventh (or in other editions the tenth) chapter of the treatise *Sanhedrin*, and in the first chapter of *Rosh-hashana*. I proceed to give a translation of the former—that is to say of the Mishna—and shall then proceed to examine the glosses and amplifications of the Gemara.

1. "All the Israelites have their portion in the world to come, as it is said (Isa. lx. 21): Thy people shall also be all righteous—they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. But these are they who have no portion in the life to come; he who says there is no resurrection of the dead according to the Scriptures,<sup>4</sup> he who says the law is not divine, and the Epicurean. Rabbi Akiba said: He also who reads strange [foreign] books, and he who uses incantations for wounds, saying (Exodus xv. 26): I will put none of the diseases on thee which I have put upon the Egyptians, for I am the

<sup>1</sup> *Aboth*, iv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Il Messia secondo gli Ebrei*, page 248, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Hilchoth Teshuba*, ch. viii., 2.

<sup>4</sup> The words "according to the Scriptures" are found in most editions of the *Mishna*, but are wanting in the Cambridge edition, edited by Lowe, and also in the parallel passages of the Talmud Yerushalmi, *Pea* I. 1. Cf. Rabbinowicz, *Variae Lectiones*, ix. 247.



Lord that healeth thee. Abba Saul likewise said: And also he who pronounces the [Divine] name as it is written.

2. Three kings and four private individuals have no part in the world to come. The three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. But Rabbi Jehuda said: Manasseh will have his portion in the world to come, as it is said (2 Chron. xxxiii. 13): And he prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again unto Jerusalem, unto his kingdom. It was replied to this, that he brought him again unto his kingdom, but not unto the life of the world to come. The four private individuals are Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi.

3. Those who perished in the deluge will have no part in the life to come, and will not arise at the judgment day, as it is said (Genesis vi. 3): My spirit shall not strive with man for ever. The generation that built the tower of Babel will have no part in the world to come, as it is said (Genesis xi. 8): The Lord scattered them abroad from thence over the face of all the earth"—that is to say, in this world, while the repetition of the statement in the following verse refers to the world to come. The inhabitants of Sodom will have no part in the world to come, as it is said (Genesis xiii. 13): The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against the Lord exceedingly—*wicked* in this world, *sinners* in the world to come, but they will arise at the day of judgment. Rabbi Nehemiah said: Neither the inhabitants of Sodom nor those who perished in the deluge will arise at the judgment day, as it is said (Psalm i. 5): The wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous *The wicked shall not stand in the judgment* alludes to those who perished in the deluge, and *the sinners in the congregation of the righteous* to the inhabitants of Sodom. They answered him thus: They will not arise in the congregation of the righteous, but they will arise in that of the impious. The men who went to search out the [promised] land will have no part in the world to come, as it is said (Numbers xiv. 37): Those men that did bring an evil report of the land, died by the plague before the Lord—*died* in this world and *by the plague* in the world to come. Those who perished in the wilderness will have no part in the world to come, and will not arise at the day of judgment, as it is said (Num. xiv. 35): In this wilderness they shall be consumed and there they shall die. This was Rabbi Akiba's opinion, and Rabbi Eleazar said it has been said for them (Psalm l. 5): Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. The companions of Korah will not arise again

[from their abyss], as it is said (Num. xvi. 33): The earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly—the earth closed upon them in this world, and they perished from among the assembly in the world to come. This was Rabbi Akiba's opinion, but Rabbi Eleazar said that for them it has been said (1 Sam. ii. 6): The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. . . .<sup>1</sup>

4. The inhabitants of a city condemned for idolatry will have no part in the world to come, as it is said (Deut. xiii. 14): Certain evil men are gone out from the midst of thee."

This passage presupposes so many things that it requires some commentary. First, the world to come, *olam ha-ba*, is spoken of in a sort of impromptu manner, before any definition of its meaning has been given. Secondly, we find it stated that all the Israelites will be called to enjoy the beatitude of the world to come, as if they were all righteous and not even the greatest sinners were to be excluded. Those only were to be deprived of future bliss, who did not believe in the law, those who transgressed two commandments of no moral importance, and finally certain historical individuals and certain classes of persons, as for instance the inhabitants of a city condemned for idolatry. Again, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body appears incidentally in the statement that he who does not believe that this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures will have no part in the world to come, a phrase, which in the context where it occurs, certainly means a life *after* the resurrection. The portion of the Gemara, which touches on this passage, says that he who denies that this doctrine is found in the Scriptures is punished as he deserves—he denies the resurrection of the dead, and in consequence shall not enjoy it himself. There is therefore no doubt that in this passage the expression *olam ha-ba*—the world to come—is intended to mean the resurrection of the dead. But it was not sufficient for the Talmudists to propound the dogma that the dead are destined to arise again; they considered it necessary to prove that this doctrine is to be found in the Scriptures.

It would be tedious to repeat here all the strained interpretations, by means of which Biblical passages, similar to those

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<sup>1</sup> I omit what is said of the ten tribes, because, although in the ordinary editions of the Talmud, the *Tosefta* says (f. 110b), "The ten tribes will have no part in the world to come," I consider the more correct version to be, "they will not return," i.e., to the promised land in the Messianic age.

used in the *Mishnah Sanhedrin*, are twisted into meanings that they cannot possibly contain. It will be sufficient to mention that two learned men, Rabbi Ashi and Rabina, with more good sense than their colleagues, deduced the doctrine of the resurrection from the one passage that really alludes to it—that namely in the Book of Daniel (xii. 2, 13).

It is important to notice that in those discussions in the Gemarah, where the Sadducees dispute with Rabbi Gamaliel (*Sanhedrin*, fol. 90 b), they accept as convincing only one of the Scriptural proofs which he offers, although to say the truth, this special one does not seem any more logical or convincing than the others<sup>1</sup> :—

It is narrated that a Roman emperor<sup>2</sup> asked R. Gamaliel how he could maintain that the dead would arise after they had turned into dust. To this question, the daughter of the Rabbi replied to the emperor: "In our city there are two vase-makers—one makes his vases from water, and the other from potter's clay. Which is the more praiseworthy?" The emperor answered, "He who makes them of water." From which she drew this conclusion: "If then God has made man out of a liquid, is there not all the more reason that he should create them anew out of clay—out of the dust?"

In the school of Rabbi Ishmael the possibility of the resurrection of the body was proved by another comparison. They said, if objects of crystal, which are formed by the breath of man can be mended when they are broken, how much more easily can man himself, who is formed by the spirit of the Most Holy (blessed be he) be created anew.<sup>3</sup>

It is further related that a heretic<sup>4</sup> asked the same question of R. Ami that the emperor had put to R. Gamaliel, and received the following answer: "I will tell thee to what this may be compared. To a mortal king, who commanded his subjects to build him a number of grand palaces in a place where there was neither earth nor water. They went and built

<sup>1</sup> Compare in the New Testament (Matthew xxii. 23-33; Mark xii. 18-27; Luke xx. 27-40) similar discussions between the Sadducees and Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the editions have here *renegade*, *apostate* (Chofer), but the *codices* and the ancient editions have *Cæsar* emperor. Compare Rabinowicz, *op. cit.*, page 250, n. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Compare *Beresith Rabba*, § 14.

<sup>4</sup> The MSS. of Munich and the early editions have *Mina* (See Rabinowicz, *op. cit.*, ix. 250), which we translate *heretic*. The modern editions have 'מִינָי, *Sadducee*, because in the Talmud *Min* or *Mina* often signifies Christian. Here, however, neither a Christian nor a Sadducee can be meant; the latter, because at the time of R. Ami that sect no longer existed; the former, because the resurrection of the dead was one of the dogmas of Christianity. Some kind of heretic must have been meant adverse to Judaism, perhaps a Gnostic. (*Hamburger Real Encyclopædie*, I., 127.)

them, but after a time the palaces fell in ruins; and the king told them to go and build others in a place, where there was both earth and water. They replied that they could not. The king was angry with them and said: 'You built them first in a place, where there was neither earth nor water, ought you not to do so all the more easily now you have both?' And if thou dost not believe this," continued the sage, "go into a valley and look at a mouse that to-day is half earth and half flesh,<sup>1</sup> to-morrow it moves and is all flesh. And if thou sayest that takes a long time, go up a hill and see that to-day there is not a single snail, and to-morrow it rains and everything is full of snails."

Finally, we are told of a heretic, who said to a Pharisee: "Woe unto you, ye sinners, who say the dead will live again. The living die; how then shall the dead live again?" He answered: "Woe unto you, ye sinners, who say that the dead will not live again. Those who did not previously exist are made alive; how much more then those who have already once been among the living?"

But, as everyone must see for himself, such arguments prove very little. Such comparisons and hypothetical arguments cannot prove a fact so contrary to the laws of nature as the resurrection of the dead. It is, however, of no importance to us here whether the Pharisees argued well or ill; we only desire to show how high a value they set on the belief in the resurrection of the dead, and how they tried to prove it by every kind of argument. We may mention yet another way in which they tried to prove their point by reference to divine justice, which ought, they said, to punish or reward body and soul together, since both were equally deserving of reward or punishment. Respecting this matter we are told that the Emperor Antoninus<sup>2</sup> put the following questions to Rabbi: The body and the soul may both free themselves from judgment and punishment in the following manner:—"The body may say, It is the soul, which has sinned, for the instant

<sup>1</sup> In the Talmud (as with other ancient nations) the theory of spontaneous generation was held with regard to certain animals.

<sup>2</sup> Who the emperor was that was contemporary with Rabbi (Jehuda the Holy) has been a matter of dispute. The philosophical opinions attributed to him in the Talmud might suggest either Antoninus or Marcus Aurelius, but in both cases we are met by the chronological difficulty that Jehuda the Holy flourished after the death of these two emperors. As, however, the whole of the intercourse between Jehuda the Holy and the emperor is legendary, the identity of the latter is not of much importance, but it is a point of moral and theological interest to see what were the imaginary relations between a Roman Emperor and a Jewish sage in the first centuries of the Christian era.

it has departed from me, I am like stone immured in the grave. And the soul may say, It is the body, which has sinned, for the instant I have departed from it, behold I fly upwards through the air like a bird." Rabbi answered: "I will tell thee a parable, which this matter resembles. A mortal king had a beautiful garden, full of fine fruit, and placed two men to guard it—one lame and one blind. The lame man said to the blind man: 'I see some fine fruit in this garden; come, take me on your back, and we will go and eat it.' Accordingly the lame man got on the blind man's back, and they took and eat the fruit. After a time the master of the garden came and said: 'Where are my first fruits?' The cripple answered: 'Have I feet that would enable me to reach your fruit?' And the blind man said: 'Have I eyes to see?' What did the master do? He put the lame man on the blind man's back and punished both together. Thus the Most Holy (blessed be He) leads the soul back to the body, and judges both together" (*Sanh.* fol. 91).

### III.

The fact of the belief in the resurrection of the dead is thus superabundantly established. At this point various minor questions present themselves. Will *all* the dead arise again, or only the Israelites, or only the righteous? When and where will this resurrection take place? In what condition will the body arise? Will the life after the resurrection be eternal, or will it end after a shorter or longer period? And, finally, what becomes of the soul from the day of the death of the body until the day of the resurrection?

The Talmud does not contain precise and consistent answers to any of these questions. The answers vary according to the time and place in which they were written, the influence of alien doctrines, and also the development of the personal ideas of the writers.

With regard to the first question, if we accept what is stated in the passage quoted from *Sanhedrin*, the answer is simple. First, all the Israelites will have their part in the world to come, with the exception of certain specified sinners. But even the phrase, "*have their part*," gives rise to some doubt. Does it mean merely that they will arise from the dead, or that they will enjoy the bliss that is to follow the resurrection? And here again we find some disagreement. Why, in the first paragraph of the passage quoted above, is the resurrection spoken of as a reward in itself, while in the

conversation between the emperor and Rabbi, the resurrection of the body appears to be the lot of both good and bad, in order to enable the former to receive their reward and the latter their punishment? Again, in a passage of the Mishna (*Aboth*, iv. 22), where the resurrection is briefly but clearly inculcated, no distinctions are made, but it is simply stated that as those who are born are destined to die, so those who die are destined to rise again. It is evident that these two propositions would not correspond, if a large number of the dead were excluded from the resurrection. Elsewhere, however, we find it affirmed that the resurrection is only for the righteous: "A day of rain is worth more than that of the resurrection of the dead, because the former is alike for the righteous and the unrighteous, and the latter is for the righteous only" (*Taanith* 7<sup>a</sup>).

Confronted by such diverse opinions, it seems clear that the only way to establish some sort of order is to distinguish the different beliefs prevailing among the Hebrews with regard to a future life.

At first (and this principally in the Palestinian school) the theory of the soul after death having an existence separate from the body was not maintained, and for some time there was prevalent the old vague idea of Sheol—a life beyond the tomb, where all the shades were united in a dreary, shadowy existence, deprived of all earthly felicity. Then the desire felt by all religious men of finding some way of reconciling the sorrows of the righteous with the dogma of divine justice, led them to conceive the doctrine that after a longer or shorter period, the righteous would in a new life enjoy the felicity of which in this world they had been deprived. But this new life was not only that of the soul, but also of the body, as if death were not annihilation, but only the suspension of life.

It is possible that this doctrine was, as some think, first adopted by the Hebrews under the influence of the religious ideas of the Parsees; but, doubtless, their own religious development led them also to find in the allegorical expressions of the prophets a foundation on which to construct a doctrine which many considered—what, in fact, it was—a startling innovation. It was easy for the Pharisees to take literally such figurative expressions as the following: "I kill and I make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 39); "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up" (1 Sam. ii. 6); "After two days he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him" (Hosea vi. 2); "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as

the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead" (Isaiah xxvii. 19); "He hath swallowed up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (Isaiah xxv. 8). Finally, the well-known thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel was likely to make a deeper impression than any other passage.

At the same time, however, belief in the resurrection was mingled with Messianic hopes, and with a faith in the political and religious revival of the whole people.

A more careful consideration must be given to that passage in the Book of Daniel, which, as I have already said, is the only one in the Old Testament (excluding the Apocrypha) that distinctly alludes to the resurrection. After having announced the gravest misfortunes under the Seleucids, the author promises the deliverance of the people, and adds: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel xii. 2, etc.). Even the dead, then, are to enjoy the revival of the Hebrew nation—that is to say, the righteous among them—while the wicked are to suffer eternally according to the greatness of their sins. This general conception was subsequently further developed by the following reflections.

During all the persecutions of the Hebrews, though there were many sinners, there were also many righteous, and among these latter, the martyrs were undoubtedly the most praiseworthy. Why, then, should not they who died in a time of national misfortune enjoy the Messianic revival? If they did not, where was the justice of Providence? If a belief in the immortality of the soul had once been clearly and distinctly conceived, the answer would have been easy. The souls of those Hebrews who had died during the period of national misfortunes would not only enjoy the felicity of heaven, but would moreover from their abode of bliss have the happiness of beholding the fulfilment of the Messianic promises. But as the belief in the immortality of the soul had not been formulated with absolute precision, men were naturally led to imagine that the righteous would return to life again to enjoy that which they had hoped for, in a more or less distant future. It was this hope, which, as we have already seen, encouraged the martyrs to face undauntedly the most cruel tortures, and even death itself. We die now, they said, but the national revival will come sooner or later, and then we, too, shall be raised up to life again by the will of God, and shall enjoy the victory of

our people. This is "the world to come," in which, as the Talmud says, all the Israelites will have their portion (excepting some specified sinners), and, as will be seen from the following passage, it was taught that other nations were excluded from this Messianic revival, which all the Israelites were to enjoy. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said, "The rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead, for the latter is for man only, and the former for man and beast; the resurrection of the dead is for Israel, and the rain for all nations."<sup>1</sup>

This is the national side of the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the dead. But, on the other side, Judaism passes the limits of a national religion, and if it is not actually a universal religion, it has allowed the road to be opened by which to become one. As in the literature of the rabbis, "Jehovah" becomes "Adonai," the Lord, the God of all that is created, his retributive justice cannot restrict itself to the children of Israel, but must embrace all men of every race and of every creed.

If all the Israelites are destined to live again in a new earth and under a new heaven, this does not mean that only they are to be thus highly favoured. In fact the Talmud's teaching on this point is perfectly clear.

We have seen that Balaam is mentioned among those excluded from the world to come. He, as is well known, was not one of the Hebrew people, and the Talmud consequently argues very reasonably as follows: Balaam will have no part in the world to come, but others—that is others not of the Hebrew race—may have part in it (*Sanhedrin* 105a). This Talmudic deduction is perfectly logical, because if all the non-Jews were to be excluded from the joys of the world to come, it would have been useless to mention one of them in so explicit a manner. It is true that amongst the Pharisees there were some who maintained the intolerant opinions that all non-Jews would be excluded from the joys of the world to come. But in opposition to this opinion of Rabbi Eleazar, a very learned, but very narrow-minded man, there prevailed, the far more liberal view of Rabbi Joshua, expressed in the well-known sentence, "The righteous of all nations will have part in the world to come."<sup>2</sup> In other passages of the Talmud the righteous and the wicked are spoken of as having to appear before the divine justice, without any distinction being made between the Israelites and other nations. It is therefore clear that, though the New Testament repeatedly speaks of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Bereshith Rabba*, § 13; compare *Vayikra Rabba*, § 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Tosefta*, *Sanhedrin*, ch. xiii.



resurrection being the destiny of all mankind, this doctrine was already current among the Pharisees, and was merely adopted and subsequently taught by Christianity.

Who, according to the Pharisaic doctrine, will be excluded from the enjoyment of celestial life after the resurrection? Among the first mentioned, as we have seen, are those Jews who deny that the doctrine of the resurrection can be proved from the Scriptures. The Gemara comments on this point in the following manner: He who denies the existence of a certain benefit, ought not to be permitted to enjoy it himself, for God rewards and punishes, measure for measure.

The second category of those excluded by the Mishna contains those who deny the divine origin of the law of Moses. The *Boraita* carries this exclusion to the utmost limits, and even those who consider a single verse of the law to be the mere product of the human mind, or those who deny the divinity of the deductions which the sages have drawn from the Law's text are doomed to exclusion. Rabbi Meir moreover says, He who studies the Law and does not teach it, despises the Law, and is therefore excluded from the resurrection. Rabbi Nathan considered that he who did not sufficiently value the Mishna would share the same fate, and finally Rabbi Neharai pronounced sentence of exclusion against those who, though able to study the Law, had neglected to do so. Rabbi Ishmael, on the contrary, considered "despising the law" to be identical with the sin of idolatry.<sup>1</sup>

The third category is filled by the Epicureans. There can be no doubt that the followers of Epicurus are designated by the Mishna under the title of "Epicuros." The intimate relations existing at the time of the sages of the Mishna, between the Jewish and the Græco-Roman nations, explain sufficiently how it was possible for the doctrines of the Epicureans to have found not a few followers among the Hebrews. It was, therefore, natural that the Pharisee Rabbis considered those excluded from the enjoyment of a future life who denied the divine agency in the government of the world, and considered pleasure, however refined, to be the foundation of practical life. In fact the explanation of the word "Epicuros," given in an early addition to the Mishna, may be very well applied to the Epicureans, "despisers of the Word of God."<sup>2</sup> But it appears that at a later date, when the Gemara

<sup>1</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 99a.

<sup>2</sup> Maimonides included among the "Epicureans" whoever denied that God knew all the works of man (Cf. *Teshuva*, III., 8), which is tantamount to denying the existence of Providence, one of the chief points of the Epicurean philosophy.

was compiled, the real meaning of the word "Epicuros" was forgotten, and Rab and R. Chanina restricted it to those who despised the majesty of the law, and R. Jochanan and R. Joshua b. Levi, to him who despised his companion in his presence (*Sanhedrin*, 99 b). If we enter into particulars as to the sort of contempt to which the sages of the law referred, it is recorded that the wits of the period said: Of what use are they [the sages]? They read and explain the Scriptures for themselves. Or again they said: Of what use are those learned in the law? They have never allowed anybody to eat a raven<sup>1</sup> or forbidden a dove.

In the Talmud Yerushalmi and in other portions of the Mishna there are further enumerated, as excluded from the life after the resurrection, those who disobey the law, though they acknowledge its divine origin, those who transgress the covenant of Abraham and those who explain the law in a sense different from that accepted in the ritual (*Sanhedrin*, x. 1). There is no doubt that this is the meaning of the most ancient text, but the Gemara, on the contrary, explains it to signify the man who transgresses the precepts of the law in public. R. Eleazar added to the list him who treated sacred things as if they were profane, him who did not keep the solemn feasts, and him who shamed his companion in public;<sup>2</sup> he also follows the Mishna in counting as sinners those who explain the law in a different sense from that accepted by the ritual.

The opinion of R. Akiba, that he who reads strange books is to be reckoned among the sinners, is also worthy of note, first, on account of its intolerant severity, and secondly, because it naturally occurs to us to ask what is meant by the Rabbi's "strange" books. The first explanation given in the Gemara (100b), that strange books mean heretical books, seems to us the most acceptable. The opinion which includes Ecclesiasticus among prohibited books is groundless, as the book of the son of Sirach is not only quoted in the Talmud as one of sound doctrine, but is invested with almost religious authority. It is therefore important to observe that the Talmud Yerushalmi teaches that the works of Homer and all others written from that time forward may be read like any other literature. It is thus clearly evident that the Pharisees, at least at certain times and in certain schools, did not prohibit the study of foreign literature.

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned Leviticus xi. 15 among the birds prohibited for food.

<sup>2</sup> *Aboth*, III., 11; *Aboth of R. Nathan*, 54; cf. *Baba Mezia*, 58b, the last part of which is attributed to Rabbi Chanina.

Rabbi Chanina included the adulterer in the list of sinners, but held that his sin was considered expiated if he had suffered for it the penalty of death (*Baba Mezia*, 58b).

We find further that Rabbi Eleazar considered that the proud would be excluded from the resurrection, which he distinctly declares to be the reward of humility (*Sota* 5a). According to others, all those who are ignorant of the law, or at least those who have not in some degree aided or been useful to those who study it, are excluded from the blessedness of the resurrection (*Chethuboth* 111a). But this excessively severe view was not generally adopted.

In another passage of the Talmud (*Rosh Hashana* 17a), which we shall examine in detail later on, the list of sinners includes those who betray their own countrymen, and the tyrannical governors of peoples and provinces. Maimonides also adds homicides, whom he calls shedders of blood, to the list (Cf. *Teshuba* iii. 6). And finally, who would think that some of the Rabbis among the Pharisees excluded usurers from the resurrection (*Tosafoth*, *Sota* 5a)? It certainly is remarkable that the Hebrews, whom other nations have frequently considered the usurers of mankind, should have amongst their religious teachings so severe and explicit a condemnation of usury.

If we now resume the examination of our passage from *Sanhedrin*, we shall find that Rabbi Akiba's exclusion of those who pretended to cure wounds by repeating a verse of the Scriptures as a spell, shows how anxious he was to keep the Hebrews apart from the superstitious beliefs in incantations so common among other nations. The Gemara, however, restricts the prohibition to those cases, where besides repeating a verse of the Scriptures, an irreverent act was committed, such as spitting, which was customary on those occasions.

The dictum of Rabbi Saul, who included among the sinners those who pronounce the divine name as it is written, shows that at that time it was already considered ineffable for any laymen.

As regards the condemnation of individuals, it seems at first sight astonishing that the Mishna places only the three kings, Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh on the list of sinners, to the exclusion of many other kings of Judah and Israel, whom the Bible describes as impious and wicked. But according to another opinion, attributed to R. Meir, not only these three, but also Ahaz, Ahaziah, and all those kings of Israel of whom it is said that they did evil in the sight of the Lord, will not arise at the resurrection, nor will they be

summoned to the last judgment.<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Meir further included Absalom in the list, because he rebelled against his father.

But elsewhere we find milder opinions prevailing with respect to the three kings and to three of the other individuals enumerated in the list of sinners. They are all to be pardoned and allowed to enjoy the future life, with the sole exception of Balaam, who receives no pardon.

It is noteworthy that even Doeg and Ahithophel, who betrayed David, are to meet the latter in the world to come, without his feeling any indignation at beholding them among the blest, as God himself will act as peacemaker between them.<sup>2</sup> This last idea, though expressed in a popular form and without avoiding the anthropomorphism, from which no positive religion can be entirely free, shows nevertheless the Pharisees' pure and elevated conception of the future life. In it, they said, benign sentiments alone exist, and those who have been the fiercest enemies on earth will there be united in the bonds of friendship and benevolence.

It is important to notice the distinction which is made between "enjoying the world to come," and "arising for the judgment-day." Thus it is stated that those who perished in the flood will neither enjoy the world to come, nor arise at the Day of Judgment, while, according to the general opinion, the inhabitants of Sodom will arise at the Day of Judgment, but will not be permitted to enjoy the world to come. Rabbi Nehemiah held that they would be deprived of both, on account of their wickedness, but those who maintained the opposite opinion replied that they would arise in the assembly, not of the righteous, but of the wicked. This is an important point, because we may deduce from it, that, according to the doctrine of the Talmud, the resurrection will be for all mankind, with but a few specified exceptions. But not all who thus arise will be among the blest. On the contrary, everybody will be judged according to his merits, and after the resurrection will either enjoy beatitude or suffer an eternity of torment.

#### IV.

The next point which I propose to consider is the time when and place in which the resurrection is to occur. If it be re-

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<sup>1</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 103b, compare Yerushalmi, *Sanhedrin* 10, 2; *Vayikra R.*, §§ 36, where the same opinion is attributed to Bar Kappara.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin* 104b *et. seq.*; compare Yerushalmi *loc. cit.* and *Bamidbar Rabba* 14 (beginning).

membered that the resurrection of the dead was in the first place imagined to be the reward of the righteous Israelites who died before the coming of the Messiah, it is easy to understand that its advent was supposed to coincide with that of the Messianic age. In fact, the miracle of raising the dead was one of the wonders which the Messiah and his precursor, Elijah, were foretold to perform.<sup>1</sup>

In consequence of this theory it was further held that only those buried in the promised land would rise again.<sup>2</sup> And when it was objected to this, that it would be unjust if the righteous who had been buried in other countries were to be excluded from the resurrection owing to no fault of their own, the answer was one of those expedients so common in the dialectics of the Talmud—namely, that the bodies of the righteous buried in other countries would be conveyed subterraneously to the promised land, whence they would then emerge to the enjoyment of a new life.

But since the doctrine of the resurrection was extended so as to include the entire human race, the dogma was established that the resurrection was to be not merely a national recompense for the Israelites, but a final and conclusive distribution of rewards and punishments, due to the righteous and the wicked of all nations and of all creeds. This teaching is clearly set forth in the following passage:—“And the most Holy—blessed be he—will ordain the resurrection of the dead in the time of the son of David (the Messiah), in order to give a reward to his followers and to those who fear him, and he will ordain a resurrection in the world to come to give justice and equity.”<sup>3</sup>

A passage in the Talmud speaks still more clearly and conclusively of the final judgment awaiting not only the Israelites, but also the other nations:—

“The school of Shammai said: ‘There will be three classes at the Day of Judgment; the first will be the righteous, the second the wicked, and the third all those who are neither very righteous nor very wicked. The righteous are immediately inscribed and sealed for eternal life, the wicked for Gehenna, as it is said (Daniel xii. 2): And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; while those who are neither very righteous nor very wicked will descend into Gehenna, but after remaining there

<sup>1</sup> Talmud Yerushalmi *Sabbath* I., 5; *Shekalim* III., 4; T. B. *Sota* 49b; *Pirke R. Eleazar*, 32; Midrash on *Proverbs*.

<sup>2</sup> *Chetuboth*, 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Tana debe Eliyahu Rabba*, 5.

for a time they will come forth again, as it is said (Zech. xiii. 9): I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them. Hannah said of them: The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up (1 Sam. ii. 6).’ The school of Hillel said: ‘He who is great in pity (God) inclineth unto pity, and for them [*i.e.*, the moderately righteous] David has said: I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice (Psalm cxvi.); and further in the same Psalm: I was brought low, and he saved me. The Israelites and the sinners of other nations who sinned in the body will descend into hell, and will be punished there for twelve months, after which their bodies will be consumed, and their bones will be burned and scattered under the feet of the righteous, as it is said (Malachi iv. 3): And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet. But the heretics, the betrayers of their countrymen, the Epicureans, those who deny the law or the resurrection of the dead, those who separate themselves from the religious community, those who have inspired fear in the land of the living, those who have sinned themselves and caused the multitude to sin, like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and others like him [*i.e.*, special classes of great sinners], will descend into Gehenna, and will suffer there for endless centuries, as it is said in the Scriptures (Isaiah lxvi. 24): And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. If hell ended, they would not end.’”<sup>1</sup>

The Judgment Day, which is mentioned in this passage, must necessarily be the final judgment at the resurrection of the dead. This is proved by the citation of the passage in the Book of Daniel, which shows that it cannot be supposed to mean the judgment of the individual after death. Most of the commentators agree on this point, and it will be sufficient to mention the Tosafists, who, moreover, foresaw the possible suggestion that a universal judgment would be useless if each individual had already been judged separately immediately after death. The Tosafists held that the individual judgment had only a temporary effect, while that of the great Day of Judgment was for eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rosh Hoshanah*, 16b, *seq.*, compare *Sefer Olam*, ch. III., *Tosefta of Sanhedrin*, ch. XIII.

The above passage, however, presents certain other difficulties, of which an explanation must be attempted.

According to the school of Shammai those whom we may describe as neither great saints nor special sinners were to suffer for a time, and then to emerge purified from the place of punishment. The same opinion is expressed in another part of the Talmud (*Sabbath* 152*b*), where it is said that these mediocre souls and those of great sinners would both alike be consigned to the evil spirit "Duma," but that the former would ultimately find repose, while the latter would not.

The school of Hillel, on the contrary, held that God would treat this medium class according to the full measure of His mercy, and would place them among the blest immediately after the resurrection, without inflicting on them any preliminary punishment. This view would at first seem to make no distinction between the moderately righteous and the perfectly just, but the difference, according to the Hillelites, is to be found in the penalties which the former will have to endure *before* the resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

One of the commentaries of the Gemara explains that the Israelites who "sinned in the body" meant those who neglected to wear the phylacteries, while the strangers thus spoken of were those guilty of incest and similar crimes. This interpretation appears impossible for three reasons: First, the sin of omitting phylacteries is too slight to be visited with eternal punishment. Secondly, it is most unlikely that such very different sinners should be classed under the same head, even though the one division comprised Israelites and the other "strangers." Thirdly, it cannot be imagined that the words "sinned in the body" can be applied to the transgression of a rite concerning a sacred adornment. The words "sinned in the body" are, therefore, applied by the author of this *Boraitha* to all those guilty of adultery, incest, and other similar crimes, who were to be condemned, not to eternal punishment, but to the annihilation of body and soul. This appears to be the meaning of the burning of the soul and dispersing it to the winds.<sup>2</sup>

It is worthy of note that it is only in speaking of those

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Talmud Yerushalmi *Pea* i. 1, *Sanhedrin* x. 1, where the same opinion is attributed to Rabbi Eleazar.

<sup>2</sup> Nachmanides (*Shaar-haggemul*) gives this Talmudic passage a very different interpretation from the simple and literal one. He states that after twelve months of suffering, these sinners will not be destroyed, but will pass into a state devoid both of pain and pleasure, like that of the souls in limbo. But can this interpretation be possibly given to the words of the Talmud?

who "sinned in the body" that sinners not of Hebrew race are specially mentioned, and that they are to receive the same punishment as the Israelites. In all the other classes no mention is made of nationality.

The date of the general resurrection must clearly be subsequent to the end of the world. This is proved by the passage already quoted from "Tana debe Eliyahu," which marks off the Messianic age from that of the resurrection. It is further confirmed by a passage from the *Sifre* on Deuteronomy (§ 357), in which it is said that before Moses' death God showed him the whole history of the world from the day of the creation to that of the resurrection of the dead. It is evident that the resurrection of the dead is considered the end of the world, whereas the coming of the Messiah, according to the Jewish belief, was to be followed by a national revival ushering in the Messianic age.

There are, therefore, apparently, according to the dogmas of Judaism, two resurrections at different times and for different purposes; one for the people of Israel at the coming of the Messiah, and one for the whole race of man when the end of time brought the Day of Judgment.

In what condition will the dead arise? With their former physical defects or in perfect health; clothed or naked? To the first question it was replied (*Sanhedrin*, 91b) that all the dead would arise in the same state as that in which they had been at the time of their death, but that God would then heal the righteous of every bodily infirmity, as otherwise they would not be able to enjoy perfect happiness. As to the second question, Rabbi Meir is said to have given the following answer to a certain queen named Cleopatra<sup>1</sup>: Let us take an argument from the grain. If the grain, that has been sown in the ground, arises thence fully clothed, how much more will this be the case with the righteous, who are buried in their garments.<sup>2</sup>

Will the life after the resurrection be eternal or finite? On this point the Talmud expresses itself with decision: "The righteous, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause to arise at the resurrection will never return to the dust."<sup>3</sup> Here no distinction is made between the Messianic resurrection and the universal resurrection of the Judgment Day; it is merely

<sup>1</sup> This cannot be the famous Queen of Egypt, nor the wife of Herod, or of Gessius Florus, nor the Queen of Syria mentioned by Josephus, as they all lived prior to Rabbi Meir. It is, however, possible that there is an anachronism in this more legendary than historical dialogue.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 90b.

<sup>3</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 92a.



stated that after the resurrection there will be no more death. The question might also be asked concerning those who will be living at the time of the coming of the Messiah and those who will be born after that event.<sup>1</sup> According to some authorities death will cease after the commencement of the Messianic age, inasmuch as death being the consequence of sin, the former will naturally disappear when the latter becomes impossible.<sup>2</sup> But others hold that none born of women can escape death, and that, therefore, those Israelites who are living at the time of the Messiah's coming, and even those who are born afterwards, will have to die; some add the opinion that after death they will immediately arise again to enjoy the Messianic revival, while others consider that they will die after an unusually prolonged life, not to rise again until the final and universal Judgment Day.

## V.

The foregoing picture of Talmudic eschatology has been confined to its teaching in respect to the resurrection of the body. It has now to be asked what becomes of the departed from the hour of death to the day of resurrection; and this question leads up to immortality of the soul. For if the Pharisees had not considered the soul as an entity distinct from the body, they could, even while admitting the doctrine of the resurrection, have formulated the theory that the period between death and the resurrection was one if not of absolute lifelessness at least of vital suspension. This, however, was not the case. The Pharisees distinguished the soul from the body, for when they speak of the creation of man they say that God first formed Adam as one would form a mass of clay and then infused into him a living soul,<sup>3</sup> thus almost literally repeating the passage in Genesis (ii. 7).

The problem whether the soul animates the, as yet, unborn infant for a longer or shorter period before birth is frequently touched upon, and is the subject of a conversation between the Emperor Antoninus and Rabbi (*Sanhedrin*, 91a), in which the latter professes himself convinced by the emperor that the union of body and soul long precedes the birth of the child.

<sup>1</sup> Saadiah, *Emunoth vedeoth*, vii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Pesachim*, 68a, *Sanhedrin*, 91b, *Midrash Koheleth*, I. 4, *Midrash Shemuel*, § 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereskith R.*, § 14; compare *Vayikra R.*, § 9, where it is said that Adam is made partly of inferior and partly of superior substances.

The relation between soul and body is compared to the relation between God and the universe. "As the most Holy, blessed be he, fills the whole universe, thus the soul fills the whole body; as the most Holy, blessed be he, sees and is not seen, thus the soul sees and is not seen; as the most Holy, blessed be he, vivifies the whole universe, thus the soul vivifies the whole body; as the most Holy, blessed be he, penetrates the inmost parts, thus the soul penetrates the inmost parts" (*Berachoth*, 10a).

Elsewhere we find it stated that whereas it is from its parents that the child derives its bodily form, "The most Holy, blessed be he, gives it spirit and soul, sight and hearing, the power of speech and motion, knowledge, intelligence, and intellect. Then, when death is approaching, The most Holy, blessed be he, takes away the part that he has given and leaves the rest to the father and mother."<sup>1</sup>

It is thus evident that a distinction was made between body and soul, both in life and death, and, as we have seen, this distinction is also alluded to in certain parts of the Old Testament, in which the soul is spoken of as returning to God, who gave it. And though the wicked are destined for a very different fate, yet even for them death is represented as the separation of the soul from the body—a separation ordained by God. "When God takes away the soul of the just, he takes it with a tranquil spirit . . . when he takes the soul of the wicked he consigns it to malicious and cruel demons" (*Sifre*, Ed. Friedmann, 149b).

But to avoid such a misfortune everybody is exhorted to keep his soul as pure as it was given him by God, so that it may be returned to him clean and sinless. The following parable, commenting on the well-known verse of Ecclesiastes (xii. 7), was designed to impress this still more forcibly: "The spirit shall return unto God who has given it. Return it to him pure as he gave it to thee. Even as a mortal king, who gave regal garments to his servants; the wise put them away carefully in a chest, the foolish wore them when they went to work. After a few days the king required them to return the garments to him, the wise gave them back pure and unsullied; the foolish soiled and stained. The king was pleased with the former and said: 'Let my garments be placed in my treasury and let those who guarded them so well go in peace unto their homes.' But he was angry with the foolish wearers, and said: 'Let my garments be cleaned and let those who

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<sup>1</sup> *Nidda*, 31a. I have quoted the version of the *Sheeltot* of R. Achai, which is confirmed by the Tosafists in *Baba Kama*, 25a.

soiled them be bound in prison.' Thus the most Holy, blessed be he, says of the bodies of the righteous: 'He entereth into peace; they rest in their beds' (Isaiah lvii. 2); and of their souls he says: 'The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God' (1 Samuel xxv. 29). Concerning the bodies of the wicked, God says: 'There is no peace for the wicked' (Isaiah lvii. 21); and of the souls of the wicked he says: 'The souls of thine enemies them shall he sling out as from the hollow of a sling'" (1 Samuel xxv. 29).<sup>1</sup>

The idea that the soul should be returned to God pure as it was given by him is found in the morning prayer of the Hebrew ritual, which is certainly of considerable antiquity. "My God, the soul which thou hast given me is pure—thou hast created and formed it, and breathed it into me: thou dost carefully preserve it within me, and thou wilt hereafter take it from me to restore it to me in futurity." (*Berachoth*, 60b.) In these brief words the Israelite daily expresses his belief in the Divine origin of the soul, in its immortality, and in the resurrection. But this belief once taken for granted, it follows of necessity that the soul must have an independent existence from the day of its separation from the body to that of the resurrection; a theory which presented but little difficulty to the Pharisees, inasmuch as they considered the soul, if not eternal, at any rate to have existed from the day of creation, and therefore long before the body was formed.

It is said that God took counsel with the souls of the righteous in creating Adam;<sup>2</sup> and that the spirits and souls destined to give life to the body have their dwelling-place in the seventh heaven, called *Araboth*.<sup>3</sup> It is further stated that the Messianic age cannot begin until all the souls destined to give life to bodies have entered on their terrestrial existence;<sup>4</sup> and in a legendary work of more recent date there is a description of the repugnance with which the soul descends to animate the body, and of its attempted resistance to the Divine will which compels it to do so.<sup>5</sup>

A belief in the pre-existence of the soul not only facilitates a belief in its continuing to exist after the death of the body, but even leads to it as a necessary and logical conclusion. The Talmud frequently speaks of this life of the soul after death and before the body's resurrection, and of rewards and punishments beyond the limits of this life, but unconnected with those attending the resurrection of the dead. A previously quoted parable taught how the re-united body and

<sup>1</sup> *Sabbath*, 152b.

<sup>2</sup> *Bereshith R.*, § 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Hagiga*, 12b.

<sup>4</sup> *Tanchuma*, פקד', 3.

soul at the resurrection were to meet with judgment; another will show how just it is that the soul rather than the body should be called to account:—

“A priest had two wives, one the daughter of a priest, the other of a layman; he gave them charge of a meal offering, which they made unclean. When he asked, ‘Which of you has done this?’ they both denied their guilt, and laid the blame upon each other. What did the priest do? He did nothing to the daughter of the layman, and began to punish the priestess. She said, ‘My lord priest, why dost thou leave the daughter of the layman and punish me? Are we not both equally guilty?’ The priest replied, ‘She is the daughter of a layman, and has not been taught these things by her father. Thou art the daughter of a priest, and hast been taught these things by thy father; that is why I leave her and punish thee.’ Thus in the time to come, when body and soul present themselves at the judgment-seat, what will the most Holy—blessed be he—do to them? He will leave the body, and will put the soul on its trial. The soul will say: ‘Father of the universe, we have sinned together, why dost thou leave the body and put me on my trial?’ He will answer: ‘The body is made of an inferior substance, and taken from a place where sin is habitual; thou art made of a superior substance in a sinless place; therefore I leave the body, and put thee on thy trial.’”<sup>1</sup>

This trial, the judgment of God, to which the soul has to submit itself, is enumerated by Akabya, son of Mahalalel, amongst the considerations which are to be kept in mind as a moral safeguard. “Consider three things, and do not expose thyself to sin: know whence thou comest, whither thou goest, and before whom thou wilt have to render an account. Whence comest thou? From the dust. Whither goest thou? To a place of dust and worms. And before whom must thou render an account? Before the King of kings, the most Holy, blessed be he.”<sup>2</sup> And from this fate—the inexorable lot of all—none can escape. “Those who are born must die, those who die will arise again, and the living will be judged, to know, teach, and acknowledge that he is God, he is the maker, he is the creator, he is wisdom, he is justice, he is witness, he will give judgment; blessed be he, before whom there is no injustice, nor forgetfulness, nor respect of persons, nor receiving of gifts. And know that all is according to reason; nor must thou think that thy temptations will be a refuge unto thee, for it was not by thine own will that thou

<sup>1</sup> *Vayikra R.*, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Abot*h, iii. 1.

wast formed, not by thine own will that thou wast born, not by thine own will dost thou live, not by thine own will dost thou die, nor is it by thine own will that thou wilt have to render an account before the King of kings, the most Holy, blessed be he."<sup>1</sup>

Man should moreover always hold himself prepared for this judgment day, when he will have to render an account of his doings, since nobody knows when death will overtake him. "R. Eleazar said: Repent the day before thou diest. His scholars asked him: How can a man know when he will die? He answered, For that very reason thou shouldst repent every day; thou mayest, perhaps, die to-morrow, and thus every day will find thee penitent. Solomon says, in his wisdom: Let thy garments be always white, and let not thy head lack ointment (Eccles. ix. 8). Jochanan ben Zaccai said: It is like a king, who had invited his ministers to a banquet, without fixing the time. The wise attired themselves for the banquet, and stood waiting at the door of the palace, for they said: 'Can anything be wanting in the king's palace?' The foolish went after their own affairs, for they said: 'Can there be a banquet without the trouble of preparing it?' Suddenly the king summoned his ministers; the wise presented themselves in suitable attire, the foolish in unseemly guise. The king approved of the former, and was angry with the latter, and said: 'Let those who are attired for the banquet sit and eat, while the others stand and look on.'"<sup>2</sup> This judgment, which none can escape, caused great terror, even to those who might have considered themselves most righteous; so that even R. Jochanan, when near to death, was, we are told, found weeping by his disciples, who went to visit him. They said unto him, 'O our master, light of Israel, strong pillar, mighty hammer, why dost thou weep?' He answered, 'If I were to be led before a mortal king, one who is here to-day and to-morrow in the grave, and he were angry with me, his anger would not be eternal; if he imprisoned me, it would not be for ever; even if he had me put to death, it would not be an eternal death; I could, perhaps, conciliate him with words, or buy his favour with money, and yet I should weep. How much more, then, should I weep now that I am to be led before the King of kings, the most Holy, blessed be he, who lives

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<sup>1</sup> *Aboth*, iv. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Sabbath*, 153a. Compare *Aboth*, ii. 10, *Aboth of R. Nathan*, 15. This Talmudic theory coincides perfectly with that of the New Testament, Matthew xxi. 46-51, Mark xiii. 33-37, Luke xii. 40-48, and other passages.

for ever; whose wrath, if he be angry with me, is eternal; who, if he throws me into prison, will keep me there for all time; who, if he condemns me to death, does so for all eternity; whom I cannot conciliate with words, nor buy his favour with money; and, besides all this, there are before me two lives—one in hell, the other in paradise, and how do I know whither I shall be led?"<sup>1</sup>

Further details are given respecting the way in which the soul is to be judged, and it is stated that the principal questions that will be asked will be concerning man's moral conduct to his fellow-men, his obedience to natural laws, his faith in the divine promises, the education of his own intellect by means of study, and, above all, concerning his fear of God. Rabbi taught that "when man is led to judgment, the following questions are asked him: Hast thou conducted thy business matters honestly and in good faith? Hast thou set aside a portion of thy time to study the Law? Hast thou become the father of a family? Hast thou believed in the redemption? Hast thou discussed the Law with wisdom? Hast thou been able to deduce one conclusion from another? and for all this, if he possessed the fear of God, he is acquitted, if not, not."<sup>2</sup>

Though it is admitted that the soul, after the death of the body, must present itself before the judgment seat of God, it is also stated that from the very moment of death the fate of the righteous differs from that of the wicked, because God knows, even before judgment is given, what have been the deeds of all mankind, and consequently how each one ought to be treated. It is stated that "at the moment when a righteous man departs from this life, certain ministering angels proclaim before the most Holy—blessed be he:—Lord of the world, a righteous man cometh. He replies, Let the righteous come. And they go forth to meet him, and they say: Come in peace; they [the righteous] rest in their beds. (Isaiah lvii. 2.) R. Eleazar said: At the moment when the righteous departs from this world, three bands of ministering angels go forth to meet him; one says, Go in peace, and another says, He enters on his right, and the third says, Come in peace, they rest in their beds. But when a wicked man departs from this world, three bands of demons go forth to meet him, and one says: There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isaiah lvii. 21); the next says: Lie down in sorrow (Isaiah l. 11); and the third says: Go down and be thou laid with the uncircumcised" (Ezekiel xxxii. 13).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Berachoth*, 28b.

<sup>2</sup> *Sabbath*, 31a.

<sup>3</sup> *Chetuboth*, 104a; *Bamidbar R.*, § 11.

If then God already knows the merits and failings of every individual, so that from the very moment of death the angels are able to foretell the fate of the departing soul, why, it may be asked, should that soul be brought to judgment when the verdict is given beforehand? It may be answered that in this way every individual is duly shown why he is either rewarded or punished, and moreover the sinners are made to see that no defence is of any avail, and to acknowledge the justice of the supreme decree. This is, in fact, the explanation given in the Talmud. "Those who have transgressed the will of the most Holy—blessed be he—acknowledge the justice of their punishment, and proclaim before him: Father of the world, thou hast judged rightly, thou hast rewarded rightly, thou hast punished rightly, thou hast rightly created Gehenna for the wicked, and the Garden of Eden for the righteous." <sup>1</sup>

When the sentence has been thus pronounced, what will happen to the soul thus separated from the body? From the passages hitherto quoted from the Talmud, it is obvious that the Pharisees had no doubts on the subject—the souls of the righteous are to enter the Garden of Eden, or Paradise, those of the wicked Gehenna, or hell. In certain passages of the Talmud we are told who are to be reckoned among the righteous, and who among the wicked. Amongst the former are the temperate, the humble, the abstemious, the chaste; amongst the latter, the intemperate, the proud, the greedy, the shameless,<sup>2</sup> and those who talked too much with women.<sup>3</sup> Tricksters, forgers, hypocrites, and slanderers cannot present themselves before God.<sup>4</sup> Those, on the contrary, who are contented with their lot, who live on their own earnings,<sup>5</sup> and who lead a life of privation in order to be able to study the Law, are destined to take their place among the blessed.<sup>6</sup>

But there are other passages in which the fate of the wicked is very differently described. "The souls of the righteous dwell beneath the throne of divine glory, while those of the wicked wander about the world without repose."<sup>7</sup> It is further stated that even the souls of the righteous descend from heaven for the space of twelve months to visit their own bodies, and do not enjoy complete repose until the end of that period.<sup>8</sup> Again, some Talmudists, without admitting the existence of a fixed place of punishment like hell,

<sup>1</sup> *Erubin*, 19. Compare *Taanith*, 11a; *Sifre*, II., § 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Aboth*, v. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Sota*, 42a; *Sanhedrin*, 103a.

<sup>5</sup> *Aboth*, iv. 1; *Chullin*, 44a.

<sup>6</sup> *Aboth*, vi. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Sabbath*, 152a. Compare *Midrash Koheleth*, iii. 21; *Tanchuma Vayikra*, § 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Sabbath*, 152b.

say that the wicked are destined to be burnt by a fire which will be kindled by themselves, and by excessive atmospheric heat.<sup>1</sup>

The general opinion, however, that prevails in Talmudic literature as to the punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the righteous is that even before the creation of the world, hell was prepared for the former and paradise for the latter.<sup>2</sup> Some, on the other hand, hold the theory that only the infernal region, and not its consuming fire, was fashioned before the world, and that the fire was kindled on the second day of the creation, because that is the only day of which it is not said, "And God saw that it was good."

Elsewhere further particulars are given with regard to the dimensions, the divisions and the pleasures and torments of heaven and hell. Thus some Talmudic authorities state that the garden of paradise is sixty times as large as the world, that Eden, which is described as a distinct and separate locality, is sixty times as large as paradise, and that hell is sixty times as large as Eden (*Berachoth*, 34*b*). Others again maintain that both paradise and hell are infinite (*Taanith* 10). Both have been divided into seven sections, destined for the dwelling-places of the various classes of the righteous and the wicked, who are thus rewarded or punished according to their deserts.<sup>3</sup> Gradually a sort of legendary literature sprang into existence, entering more and more fully into detailed descriptions of a future life,<sup>4</sup> but this belongs more to poetry and popular literature than to theology and moral teaching. I need not, therefore, dwell upon it here in further detail, especially as it frequently deals in coarse and sensual images, chiefly intended to astonish or terrify the "general reader." On the other hand, Hebrew theologians of more recent date have endeavoured to free the conception of a future life from every vestige of sensuality, and to represent both its rewards and its punishments from a purely spiritual point of view.

But even here the Talmudists have in many cases forestalled them in their endeavours to spiritualise as much as possible the idea of a future state. They even went so far as to say (*Berachoth*, 34*b*) that no human being could form any conception of the bliss of Eden, and that the world to come cannot in any way be compared with the world of earth.

<sup>1</sup> *Bereshith R.*, 6. Compare *Aboda Zara*, 3*b*; *Nedarim*, 8*b*.

<sup>2</sup> *Nedarim*, 39*b*; *Pesachim*, 54*a*; *Tanchuma*, נשנ, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Midrash* on *Psalms*, xi. 7. Compare *Erubin*, 19*a*; *Vayikra R.*, § 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Massecheth Gehinnam*; *Midrash Chonen*; *Massecheth Echalothe*; *Maase di R. Jehoshua*; *Seder Gan Eden*.



"In the world to come there is no eating, nor drinking, nor marriage; no envy, no hatred, no rancour; but the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, and enjoy the divine splendour" (*Berachoth*, 16a).

Following this spiritualised conception, Maimonides admitted the theory of everlasting beatitude for the righteous, but not being able to conceive a spiritual punishment, he was led to conclude that the souls of the wicked would not live for ever after the death of the body, but be condemned to complete annihilation.<sup>1</sup> (This view had indeed been partly entertained by the Talmudists, who, as I have previously indicated, held that the souls of a certain class of sinners were punished by absolute destruction.) Thus even Maimonides did not consider immortality as an essential and intrinsic quality of the soul, but only as a reward for righteousness; immortality is coupled with beatitude. The punishment of the wicked will be death. This opinion was not, however, held by other Hebrew theologians. Some reproached Maimonides for thus deviating from the traditional teaching; others sought to defend him, by explaining his opinions in a different sense and by bringing them into accord with the Talmudic authorities on the subject of the resurrection and hell.<sup>2</sup> It is indeed undeniable that the prevailing tenets of Judaism are in favour of the soul's continued existence after the death of the body—the righteous to be rewarded and the wicked to be punished.

But is the punishment of the wicked eternal? The generally accepted opinion is that the hell of Jewish theology is only temporary according to the passage in the Mishna (*Eduyoth* ii. 9), which declares that the punishment of the wicked lasts twelve months, of which, according to the references below, six are spent in fire and six in ice.<sup>3</sup> But this opinion cannot be considered correct, inasmuch as this special form and duration of punishment applied only to a certain class of sinners, not to the wicked in general. A previously quoted Talmudic passage (from Rosh-Hashanah) states decisively: Hell is eternal, the punishment of certain sinners will last for ever.<sup>4</sup>

From this it may be concluded that though the Talmud assumes the existence of a temporary hell—in other words a sort of purgatory—it nevertheless also propounds the

<sup>1</sup> *Teshuba* viii.

<sup>2</sup> Nachmanides, *Shaar Haggemul*, page 19 (Vassavia, 1840).

<sup>3</sup> *Yerushalmi*, *Sanhedrin*, x. 3; *Tanchuma* תנחומי, § 13 (§ 10 Ed. Buber).

<sup>4</sup> Compare the Commentaries of Abraham ben David and Yom Tob Lipmann on the passage from *Eduyoth*, also the Tosafists on *Hagiga* 27a.

theory of a place of eternal punishment, into which the worst and most impenitent sinners will be cast even after the resurrection. Talmudic theology even goes so far as to deny that certain sinners, such as, for instance, those who perished in the flood, will rise at the resurrection, because as they are inexorably condemned to everlasting punishment, it would be useless for them to appear at the judgment seat. And, though R. Simeon ben Lakish maintained that there would be no hell in the world to come<sup>1</sup> (that is to say after the resurrection), he did not by this mean to imply that the sufferings of the wicked would cease, but that they would be eternally burned by the heat of the sun, which on the contrary would prove beneficent and life-giving to the righteous. This opinion practically admits the eternity of punishment; whether there exists a separate place, where the wicked are to be eternally imprisoned, is a merely secondary consideration.

The Talmudic belief in an abode of temporary punishment, or purgatory, had the same results in Judaism as a similar belief in Catholicism. Alms and prayers for the dead, especially those of relations, most of all those of the children of the deceased, became gradually accredited with the power of shortening the time that the soul was destined to spend in purgatory. Gradually too certain fixed times were appointed for these prayers, the first twelve months after death and the anniversary of that event for each individual, and the days of solemn feasts, especially the Day of Atonement, for the dead in general.<sup>2</sup>

## VI.

The moral side of the Jewish doctrines concerning a future life consists, however, in considering the real end and aim to which man is called, and in finding in it the recompense for the apparent injustices of fate in this earthly life. This is especially taught concerning those who voluntarily renounce the splendours of the world and suffer for the sake of righteousness. In the language of the Talmud righteousness is synonymous with the divine Law.

"He who makes himself little in this world for the sake of the words of the Law is made great in the world to come, and he who is a servant for their sake in this world is made free

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<sup>1</sup> *Nedarim*, 8b; *Aboda Zara*, 3b.

<sup>2</sup> *Sifre*, II., § 210; *Pesikta R.*, 20; *Tanchuma*, תנ"ח.

in the world to come.”<sup>1</sup> “He who suffers hunger in this world for the sake of the words of the Law, the most Holy, blessed be he, will satisfy in the world to come.”<sup>2</sup>

Certain celebrated passages in the New Testament (Matthew xix. 30, Mark x. 16, Luke xiii. 30) find their exact counterpart in the following Talmudic legend: “R. Joseph ben R. Joshua b. Levi was ill and fainted away. When he recovered consciousness, his father asked him what he had seen in his swoon. He said: ‘I saw the world upside down—the humble above, the proud below.’ His father said: ‘My son, thou hast beheld the world to come.’”<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion to be gathered from this line of argument is clear: the humble and the afflicted in this life will triumph in that future state, which to the faithful is the real life. Now this, to put it briefly, is the consoling promise which Christianity has given to the world. Judaism has taught the self-same lesson, but there is this difference between them: all the world knows this to be the teaching of Christianity, hardly anybody is aware that Judaism holds the same doctrine. And why? Because Judaism is among the lowly in this world, while Christianity, since the days of Constantine, has taken its place among the lofty.

It will therefore be advisable to enter into further details to show how the school of the Pharisees taught that a future life will recompense the righteous for their earthly sufferings. The long-standing problem of the troubles of the righteous and the triumphs of the wicked could not fail to present itself to the minds of the Talmudists, and as great liberty of opinion was allowed to all, it was said, “It is not in our power to explain the peace of the wicked, nor the sufferings of the righteous” (*Aboth* iv. 15). So great was the importance attributed to this question, that one of the boldest of the Talmudic legends represents Moses asking God himself for a solution of the problem and receiving this answer: “The righteous who suffer in this world are not perfectly righteous; the wicked who are happy are not altogether wicked” (*Berachoth*, 7a).

This solution of the problem is elsewhere amplified in the following manner: Even the wicked sometimes do some good action for which God rewards them with earthly happiness, so as to punish them afterwards in a future life; even the righteous are not quite perfect, and commit some transgression, for which God punishes them in this brief life, in order

<sup>1</sup> *Baba Mezia*, 85b.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Pesachim*, 50a ; *Baba Bathra*, 10b.

to reward them hereafter for their virtue with everlasting beatitude. It is difficult, almost impossible, to reach such a pitch of moral perfection that deserves a reward both in this world and in the world to come. This is expressed metaphorically in the Talmud: "Not every man deserves to sit at two tables" (*Berachoth*, 5b).

The same idea is still more clearly explained in the following passage:—"Blessed are the righteous, whose lot in this world is the same as that of the wicked in the world to come; woe to the wicked, whose lot in this world is the same as that of the righteous in the world to come."<sup>1</sup> Some Talmudists, it is true, admitted the possibility of the righteous enjoying felicity both in this world and the next; thus we find that certain disciples, on parting with their master, wished him double joy: "happiness in this world and the fulfilment of thy hope in eternity."<sup>2</sup> It may be observed that with the wish for temporal happiness came always the wish for the fulfilment of the hope of the righteous in the world to come, a moral principle which is accentuated in several other Talmudic passages. Various good deeds are mentioned as deserving reward in both this world and the next, but the chief recompense is always to be found in the latter, or as it is metaphorically expressed: the interest [of good deeds] is to be enjoyed here, but the capital is reserved for the world to come.<sup>3</sup>

But in general the double felicity of the righteous and the double sufferings of the wicked were considered of rare occurrence, and the theory explained above is not only the most prevalent, but also seems most consistent with the usual course of terrestrial events. The verse in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 4), "A God of faithfulness and without iniquity" was thus expounded as a commentary on this proposition. "*A God of faithfulness*: even as the wicked are punished in the world to come for a trifling sin, thus the righteous are punished in this world for any trifling transgression. *And without iniquity*; even as the righteous are rewarded for the smallest act of virtue in the world to come, thus the wicked are rewarded for the smallest act of virtue in this world."<sup>4</sup>

The Talmudists considered this doctrine so important, and so fundamental to religion, that they lost no opportunity of impressing it on the minds of the faithful. The following similes are attributed to R. Eleazar b. Zadok:—"Why are the

<sup>1</sup> *Horayoth*, 10b.

<sup>2</sup> *Berachoth*, 17a.

<sup>3</sup> *Pea*, i. 1; *Sabbath*, 127a; *Kiddushin*, 39b; *Sifre*, II., § 336; *Debarim R.*, § 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Taanith*, 11a; *Sifre*, II., § 307.

righteous in this world like a tree which grows in a pure place, while its branches stretch into an impure place? Because if the branches are cut, the tree is then wholly in a pure place. Thus the most Holy, blessed be he, makes the righteous suffer in this world, so that they may enjoy the world to come, as it is said in the Scriptures (Job viii. 7): 'Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase.' And why are the wicked in this world like a tree that grows in an impure place, whose branches stretch into a pure place? Because if the branches are cut, the whole tree is in an impure place. Thus the most Holy, blessed be he, permits the wicked to enjoy happiness in this world in order afterwards to cast them into the lowest depths of hell, as it is written in the Scriptures: 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'" (Prov. xiv. 12).<sup>1</sup>

R. Akiba teaches the same doctrine to account for the earthly happiness of the wicked and the sorrows of the righteous. The following saying is also ascribed to him:<sup>2</sup> "Eden and Gehenna were created for all mankind, but he who deserves to be called righteous enjoys in Eden not only his own share, but that of his neighbour also, while he who is condemned as wicked suffers in Gehenna his own share [of torment] as well as that of his neighbour."

In a word, the doctrine that good deeds find their reward in a world to come is taught in every possible form. R. Jacob, after enunciating the principle that good deeds do not meet with their just recompense in this world, relates the following anecdote to illustrate it: "A father one day desired his son to take some pigeons out of a nest on the roof of the house. The son climbed on to the roof, and, in obedience to the precept of the Law, chased away the mother-bird before taking the young ones, in order to preserve the race. Unfortunately, in descending from the roof, he fell down and was killed. Now as the Scripture promises a long and happy life to him who obeys his father and mother and does not transgress the precepts of the Law, it was asked: 'How about long life and happiness for this righteous man?' To which it was answered: 'He has entered into a world of perfect and eternal happiness—that is to say, into the world to come.'"<sup>3</sup>

The reward of the righteous is therefore to be sought for

<sup>1</sup> *Kiddushim*, 40b; *Aboth de R. Nathan*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Hagiga*, 15a; *Bereshith R.*, § 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Kiddushim*, 39b.

in a future life,<sup>1</sup> and the precepts of the Law must be followed to-day<sup>2</sup>—that is to say, in this world, so as to receive the reward to-morrow, that is, in the world to come.

But in order to gain the reward of future beatitude, it is not enough to be righteous for a time only. Virtue must be man's companion till the end of his life. He who at the end of his days becomes an apostate, loses all that he had gained by his previous righteousness, for he ought to have remained faithful till nightfall—that is, till the end of life.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the most Holy, blessed be he, receives even the greatest sinner who has repented at the end of his life,<sup>4</sup> and the Talmud gives many examples of sinners who were, nevertheless, summoned to eternal bliss as a reward for one good deed performed at the end of their lives. Of such it is that Rabbi says, "They have gained the world to come in an hour, while others have to toil for it through many years."<sup>5</sup>

Not only are the penitents received among the blessed, but some Talmudists have even maintained that they will be called to a higher degree of bliss than the perfectly righteous. This is, however, a disputed point, as other theologians hold that penitent sinners will never enjoy the beatitude to which the righteous will be entitled—the contemplation of the Divinity (*Berachoth*, 34b).

But great obstacles beset the path of the penitent, while it is only too easy even for the righteous to fall into sin. Hence the just, though mournful theory, that the elect are few in number. The two worlds, that is, this world and the world to come, were created with two letters<sup>6</sup>—the former with *He*, the latter with *Yod*. Now *Yod* is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and is, therefore, significant of the small number of the elect.<sup>7</sup> R. Simeon b. Yochai said, "I have seen the elect in the supreme abode, and they are few in number. If they are a thousand, I and my son are among them; if they

<sup>1</sup> *Aboth* ii. 16. Although the words לעתיד לבא may in general be taken to mean a future time, as Strack says in his note on that passage, yet here it evidently means the life to come, and other commentaries take it in that sense. Compare Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, page 55, n. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Erubin*, 22a.

<sup>3</sup> *Baba Mezia*, 83b.

<sup>4</sup> *Kiddushim*, 40b; *Yerushalmi*, *Pea*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Aboda Zara*, 10b, 17a, 18a. Jesus also on the cross said to the penitent thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 44). Compare also Dante, *Paradiso*, xiii. 139ff, *Purgatory*, iii., 122ff.

<sup>6</sup> The imaginary value and creative power of the letters of the alphabet is part of the mystic doctrine of the *Sefer Yetsira* and other similar works.

<sup>7</sup> *Menachoth*, 29b. Compare Matthew xx. 16: "Many are called; few are chosen." 2 Esdras ix. 15: "There be many more of them which perish than of them which shall be saved."

are a hundred, I and my son are among them; if they are two, those two will be I and my son.”<sup>1</sup> It must, however, be stated that theologians of a later date have endeavoured to soften and mitigate the severity of a sentence which seems to class by far the largest part of mankind among the wicked. These writers have interpreted the words of R. Simeon as referring not to *all* the elect, but to the small number of specially righteous souls, who were to be permitted to contemplate the Divine glory in all its splendour, while those only worthy of beholding it less clearly were to be far more numerous.

I have now set forth the principal teachings of ancient Jewish theologians with regard to a future life. They appear to me more than sufficient to prove that one of the fundamental doctrines of Judaism is the immortality of the soul and the rewards and punishments of a future state. This Jewish doctrine is, in fact, neither more nor less than what Christianity—and even Catholicism—teaches on the same subject, as it admits among its tenets eternal damnation for sinners, eternal bliss for the elect, a temporary hell, which is practically no other than purgatory, the efficacy of the prayers of the living on behalf of the departed, and the resurrection of the body, to be judged with the soul at the universal day of judgment.

Nor does the sect of the Karaites differ fundamentally from the Talmudists on this subject. They also inculcate the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.<sup>2</sup>

These theories were subsequently variously interpreted and expounded, when the Hebrews devoted themselves to philosophical studies, and endeavoured, in common with the followers of other religions, to reconcile the dogmas of faith with the philosophical doctrines that have successively held the chief place in the scientific world. But I shall not here enter upon these philosophic explanations, because they are the outcome of individual opinions, while for the Hebrews only the teachings of the Talmud, in matters of faith, have a religious authority.

I will merely remark that the Kabbalistic doctrines, which arose in Judaism towards the end of the twelfth century, made important modifications in the ordinary dogmas relative to a future life.

Thus one of the fundamental doctrines of the Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> *Succa*, 45b; *Sanhedrin*, 97b.

<sup>2</sup> See Aaron ben Elia, *Ez Hayyim*, ch. civ.-cxi. (ed. Delitzsch).

Kabbala is metempsychosis, by means of which the soul is not condemned to eternal punishment, but is destined to be purified by living again in another body, and by passing successively through diverse separate existences. According to this doctrine, sin and hell cannot endure for ever, but at last all souls are destined to be purified, and to return to the region of absolute goodness and perfection. In short, as one of the most celebrated Kabbalists teaches, "In truth, thou hast nothing eternal, if not on the side of good."<sup>1</sup>

DAVID CASTELLI.

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<sup>1</sup> Azaria da Fano, *Maamar Higgur-din*, v. 1. Compare Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim*, xxxi. 7.

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